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ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

for the Year ended December 31st, 1942.

To Thetford Urban District Council.

Gentlemen,

I beg to submit the Annual Report for 1942 as follows :—

Owing to the serious illness and death of Dr. A. Oliver, Medical Officer of Health at the time when this report should have been written, I have to present it from the data which he had already collected.

By instructions of the Minister of Health the report is cut down to essential details which have affected the public health, and how it has been affected by the war. This has been done with a view to saving paper and printing.

SECTION A.—STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA.

Area—7,096 acres.
Registrar-General's estimate of Population at mid-year—4,526.
Number of inhabited houses according to the rate book—1,296.
Rateable Value—£17,538.
Sum represented by a penny rate—£72 11s. 2d.

The social conditions in the town remained the same as last year, with an increased employment of women on war work.

The evacuee population remained about the same.

Vital Statistics.

		Total.	M.	F.	
Live Births	Legitimate ...	76	41	35	Birth Rate per 1,000 estimated population at mid 1942—18.6.
	Illegitimate ...	6	3	3	
Still Births		2	1	1	Rate per 1,000 total births—24.
Deaths		52	26	26	Death Rate per 1,000 average population —11.4.

Deaths from Puerperal causes (Headings 29 and 30 of the Registrar-General's short list)—

No. 29 Puerperal Sepsis	Nil.
No. 30 Other Puerperal causes	Nil.
Total	Nil.

Death Rate of Infants under one year :—

All Infants per 1,000 live-births	36.5
Legitimate per 1,000 legitimate live-births	36.5
Illegitimate per 1,000 illegitimate live-births	Nil.

Deaths from Cancer (all ages)	8
,, ,, Measles (all ages)	Nil.
,, ,, Whooping Cough (all ages)	1
,, ,, Diarrhoea (under 2 years of age)	Nil.

The Birth Rate remained a little higher than that for England and Wales 15.8, again for the reason that some wives of service men without permanent domicile came to Thetford to have their babies.

There has been no special causes of sickness or invalidity in the town during the year.

The Death Rate was about concurrent with that of England and Wales 11.6. The chief causes of death were :—Diseases of the Heart 18, Cancer 8, Cerebral Haemorrhage 5, Diseases of the Lungs 5.

The low Infantile Death Rate of 36.5 against 54 remained satisfactory.

SECTION B.—GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES IN THE AREA.

1. (1). **Personnel.**

M.O.H. part time M.D., D.P.H., who was also Medical Officer to the Infant Welfare Clinic.

Sanitary Inspector, part time, Royal Sanitary Institute.

Health Visitor, who acts as Nurse at the Infant Welfare Clinic, C.M.B., R.S.I., Health Visitors Examination, R.S.I. Maternity and Child Welfare Certificate.

District Nurse, S.R.N., C.M.B.

Town Midwife, C.M.B.

(2). **Health Services.** No change.

2. No change.

3. **Maternity and Child Welfare.**

This work carried out by the Thetford and District Maternity and Child Welfare Association, has gone on steadily and without interruption. There have been no serious outbreaks of infectious diseases. The evacuee population had fallen to 25 children of Welfare age, so the special Clinic for these children was closed and they attended the ordinary Clinics.

The fall in average attendance noted last year on account of mothers taking up war work, has continued and a return to the normal attendances is not anticipated until after the war, and a further fall may be expected. The attendances at the other Clinics have shown little change although a falling off at the Ante-Natal Clinics may be expected on account of the difficulty in obtaining Home Helps for the mothers during the confinement, as a result of this mothers are having their babies in the Nursing homes and St. Barnabas Hospital, and the examinations are made at those places. The town midwife states that our bookings are very much down this year. These things will right themselves at the end of the war so it is not advised that any change should be made in the arrangements, as the organisations should be kept at the utmost efficiency to deal with the situation at the end of the war, when it will be more than ever necessary.

At the end of the year a survey of the children under 5 years of age was made with a view to finding the percentage of children immunised against Diphtheria This was found to be 50%. The health visitor was taken off all her other work and instructed to visit the homes of all the unimmunised children and advise the parents as to the benefits of the injections, and lists of the children whose parents agreed to have the inoculation were sent to the family doctor with a view to getting the inoculation done. It is hoped in this way to increase the percentage of children protected against Diphtheria.

The W.V.S. made 500 lbs. of blackcurrant jam for distribution to necessitous cases. Another useful arrangement made by the Association was the Play Centre which was open from 7.45 a.m. until 5.30 p.m. The mothers wishing to go out to work could leave their children there to be looked after at the cost of ninepence a day.

Scabies has been prevalent this year and cases have been treated at St. Barnabas Hospital, though in future cases are to be treated by arrangement with the County Medical Officer, at Great Snoring Hospital, which would include efficient cleaning of clothes and bedding. On account of the ill health of Dr. A. Oliver, I did much of the executive medical work on his instructions.

The returns of various Clinics are as follows :—

Welfare Clinic.

No. of Mothers attendances	281
No. of Childrens attendances	357
Average attendance of Children per Clinic	12

Ante-Natal Clinic.

No. of Mothers attending	18
No. of attendances	31

Post-Natal Clinic.

No. of Mothers attending	8
No. of attendances	8

St. Barnabas Hospital Clinic.

No. of Ante-Natal cases attending	35
No. of attendances	94
No. of Post-Natal cases attending	34
No. of attendances	139

4. **Nursing Homes.** No. change.

SECTION C.—SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF AREA.

1. (1) **Water.**

No extension of Public Water supply was carried out during the year.

A sample of water is sent to the Public Analyst each year for Bacteriological and chemical examination. This report is as follows :—

> "This is a pure and wholesome water of great organic and bacteriological purity, and of excellent quality for drinking and all purposes of a public supply. There is a slight increase in the hardness compared with last year's analysis."

(2) **Drainage and Sewage.**
There have been no alterations or extensions of this service during the year.

2. **Rivers and Streams.**
No action has been taken this year.

3. (1) **Closet Accommodation.**
No changes were made during the year and the totals stand as under :—
W.C's. 311, Pails 633, Privies 376.

(2) **Public Cleansing.**
The collection of refuse remains the same as in previous years.

(3) **Sanitary Inspection of Area.**
The report of the Sanitary Inspector is as follows :—

No. of inspections for general nuisances	308
No. of informal notices served	24
No. of statutory notices served	1
No. of nuisances abated as result of informal notices served	23
No. in hand at end of year	2

(4) **Shops and Offices.**
General routine inspections carried out.

SECTION D.—HOUSING.

Limited housing routine inspections have been carried out.

SECTION E.—(a) Milk Supply.

As in previous years samples were taken and tested by lactometer.

(b) **Meat.**
Work in connection with the inspection of carcases slaughtered at the Area Slaughtering Centre at Thetford under the Ministry of Food was maintained until the end of September last, when the work was transferred to Watton. During the period that slaughtering was done at Thetford some 2,000 carcasses were examined and over 3 tons of meat condemned as being unfit for human consumption. A good proportion of tubercular meat was found.

(c) **Other Foods.**
One consignment of over 800 lbs. of Tinned Apricot Pulp was examined and condemned, also some 70 lbs. of cheese, together with a fair quantity of tinned foods at various shops.

SECTION F.—PREVALENCE OF AND CONTROL OF INFECTIOUS AND OTHER DISEASES.

During the whole year Whooping Cough might be said to be endemic, but it became an epidemic in the last quarter, the only death occurring in a child of 2 years in September.

The Ante-diphtheria Inoculation campaign has been continued and about 80% of the school age children have been inoculated and about 50% of children under 5 years of age. An improvement on this is expected in the coming year as a result of the measures mentioned earlier in this report and others which will help will be a periodic list from the Food Office of children who attain the age of one year and the visiting of these children by the Health Visitor.

Notifications.

Disease.	Total Cases notified.	Cases admitted to Hospital.	Deaths.
Pneumonia	6	3	2
Chicken Pox	10	Nil.	Nil.
Whooping Cough	48	Nil.	1
Measles	1	Nil.	Nil.
Erysipelas	Nil.	Nil.	Nil.
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	1	1	Nil.

Tuberculosis.

Age Periods.	New Cases.				Deaths.			
	Respiratory.		Non-Respiratory.		Respiratory.		Non-Respiratory.	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M	F.	M.	F.
5	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
15	—	—	—	3	—	—	—	—
25	—	—	—	3	—	—	—	—
55	—	4	—	—	—	1	—	—
65	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Totals	—	4	—	6	—	1	—	—

I regret the unavoidable delay which has occured in the submitting of this report. I would only say that Dr. A. Oliver in spite of his ill health carried out his duties of supervision of the health of the community ably helped by your Staff and Sanitary Inspector, and I have much pleasure in expressing my thanks to your Sanitary Inspector for his excellent work.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

T. L. Oliver

Medical Officer of Health.